

# WHERE IS THE SEA SERPENT?

Terror and Attraction  
of Ocean Beaches of a  
Few Years Ago Is  
Heard of No More  
—Descriptions Compare  
Reptile to All the  
Monsters  
of Pre-  
Historic  
Times



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In former days there were sea serpents aplenty. The good people of other times reported seeing them frequently. Contemporaries of Christopher Columbus saw them sporting about in the Atlantic Ocean and Sir Francis Drake sighted a few as he circumnavigated the world.

In more recent years the sea serpent tamed down and became one of the docile animals of the bathing beaches of the Atlantic Coast. Twenty-five years ago he was one of the most valued assets of the summer resorts because he did not appear all the time and summer visitors to the Atlantic Coast often would prolong their stay and enrich the pocketbooks of the resort keeper in hopes of seeing one of the monsters, who could curl around the sea and with his tail deep-swipe a herd of cattle into the briny deep in a minute, but wouldn't.

But the beloved and much prized

one seen in recent centuries. It was only 60 feet long. It was big enough, however, to devastate the vegetation along shore and to destroy fishermen's huts and kill the fishermen. Sailors finally threw a lariat over its head and dragged it to Alexandria, where they presented it to Ptolemy.

Other sea serpents were seen at various times in history, but one of the biggest was the one seen by Bishop Paul Erede, missionary to Greenland, who sailed for the land of perpetual winter July, 1734. No one will deny but that the Bishop told the truth and this is what he wrote:

"On July 6, 1734, there appeared a very large and frightful sea monster, which raised itself so high out of the water that its head reached above our main-top. It had a long, sharp snout and spouted water like a whale, and had very wide, broad flappers. The body seemed to be



**MONSTERS** of other ages. Upper left—Tylosaurus. Upper right—A restoration of cretaceous reptiles. Upper center—A mastodon. Lower center—A triceratops. Lower left—A cretaceous dinosaur.

again as long as they watched.

Another sworn statement from a reliable man was made by Rev. Donald Maclean, who wrote to a Scottish Natural History Society the following affidavit:

"I saw an animal of which you inquire in June, 1828, on the coast of Coll, Scotland. Rowing along the coast I observed at a distance of a mile an object to windward. My companions and I steered to shore in our boat. Just as we jumped ashore the animal rose at the stern of our boat. It had disappeared upon seeing us, and we thought at the time it might be making for us under water. Its head appeared at the stern of the boat just after the last man had jumped to the rocks and we had made our craft fast. It saw it was too late.

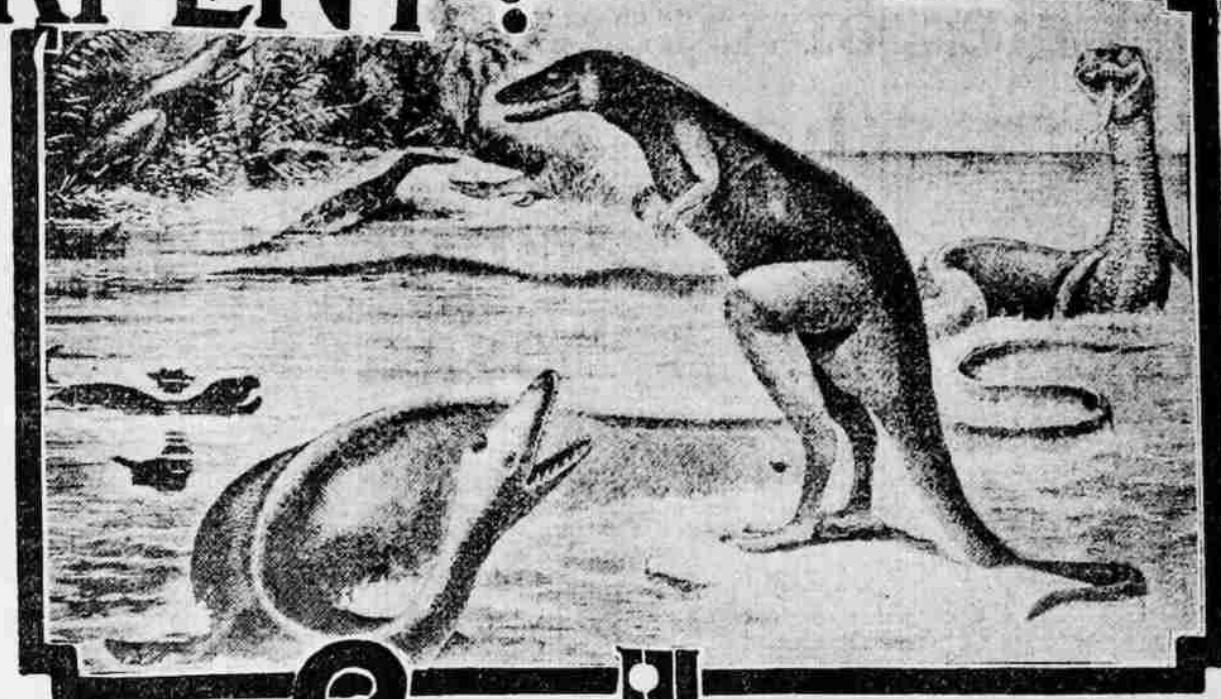
"This animal had a head somewhat broad and something in the shape of an oval. The crews of thirteen fishing boats saw that sea serpent."

The best known sea serpent appeared in 1817 in the harbor of Gloucester, Cape Ann. It was seen by some many different persons that it became a familiar object and the Linnean Society of New England sent an expedition to investigate. The expedition failed to see the serpent, but took oaths from numerous persons who claimed to see it. They took the word of only reputable persons and those only under oath.

**SPECTATORS DECLARED IT WAS UNUSUAL CREATURE.**

It certainly was an unusual creature from the sworn statements of spectators. Hon. Lonson Nash, who took the affidavits, and who in turn made one himself, described the animal as being 70 feet long. He said the largest part was as big as a hoghead and moved at the rate of a mile a minute.

Theories were advanced that the animal was a survivor of the prehistoric ages and the serpent became known as "the sea serpent." He was seen with great regularity. In 1830 he made several visits near Kennebunk, Me. He was seen by three men who were fishing off



of animals of the prehistoric ages and they do not differ much from the descriptions of the sea serpents.

In fact some of them are more grotesque than the sea serpents. Some of them are just about as impossible. We know they did exist. If they did exist, why not give the esteemed Bishops and fishermen who saw the sea serpents of a few years ago the benefit of the doubt and admit they did exist within recent years? In fact, why not look for them every little while when near the sea coast? The old-time seamen were always on the lookout for something strange and wonderful. The man of the present time is always trying to explain everything away. The old-time seaman used to look out to sea and observe some debris floating on the water and make himself believe he had seen a sea serpent. We might look out on the water and see seventeen mermaids and four sea serpents having a serpentine waltz and still doubt our eyes.

That there are terrible monsters in the deep there can be no doubt. One of these is the whale. It was only in 1908 that a whale devastated the fish traps off Port Townsend, Wash., because the fishermen had captured one of its young. A whaler recently put in port in Liverpool with the arm of an octopus 33 feet long. The arm had been taken from the mouth of a whale he had killed and had stuck in the huge animal's throat. The octopus is doubtless a more fearful animal than the sea serpent.

## Canada Nearly Annexed.

Canada came nearer becoming a part of the United States one hundred years ago than ever before, or since. An American invading army had crossed onto Canadian soil. It had won a hard fought victory, giving itself confidence. Another battle, July 25, 1814, resulted in a serious setback for the British forces. Then the stupidity, or timorousness, of an American general, elevated to command through the unfortunate wounding of his two superiors, allowed the British to regain all they had lost without firing a single gun or losing a single soldier.

After the battle at Chippewa Creek, July 5, 1814, General Brown, commanding the American forces, found himself in rather a precarious position. General Riall had been reinforced by General Drummond with several regiments of British regulars and was preparing to deal the Americans a blow that would drive them back across the Niagara River.

Brown knew this; knew he could no hope for reinforcement to himself; knew the British had 2,500 men to his 2,500, yet he determined to fight; more, he determined to attack Riall and Drummond before they were ready to crush him by mere numerical weight. Accordingly, July 25, he ordered his plucky little army to advance.

The first brigade, under Brig. Gen. Winfield Scott, was in the van and borne the brunt of the fight, as it did at Chippewa. He had some thirteen hundred men in his command. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon the advance guard of the Twenty-second Infantry, Col. Hugh Brady, met the outposts of the British near Lundy's Lane, a road a few miles northwest of Buffalo on the Canadian side.

Brown had hoped to find that the British forces divided when he ordered the advance. Scott's skirmishers soon learned different. The entire English force was in easy communication, with two thousand men occupying fortified positions in advance. Drummond commanded 1,500 in reserve. The British line was crescent shaped, along the brow of a hill that commanded the entire territory around.

Scott saw all this at a glance. To retreat would be to admit defeat; to stand still would be ultimate destruction, and to attack with his brigade seemed folly. He had only three or four small guns, while the British had planted a heavy battery in the center of their line. Notwithstanding, Scott prepared to charge. As at Chippewa, he detached part of his men as flankers. Colonel Brady and Major Jessup led three hundred on a wide detour to the right, while Scott took the remaining thousand in person.

The charge went straight to the center. It was an amazing maneuver. More than 2,000 men in a chosen position, heavily defended with artillery, were charged in the open by less than a thousand, with

300 detached for a flank attack.

The British could hardly believe their eyes. The audacity of the Americans stupefied them for a few moments. Then the roar of the attacking rifles and glitter of the bayonets the attackers carried at the charge brought them to reality. The shock of the battle was terrific. Again and again Scott led his column against the British line. Each time it was hurled back the intrepid fighter would ride along the line, reforming his men, and then, without waiting for a breath hardly, they were back at the charge again. Scott was wounded. So were Brady, O'Neill and Jessup, his regimental commanders. Leavenworth's battalion of the Ninth Infantry refused to retreat after charging the British and calmly reformed its lines within pistol shot of the British position. The other regiments, encouraged by that grandstand, reformed near by.

Brady and Jessup now succeeded in forcing their way through the British line. They circled the British rear with their handful of men, causing six times their number to retreat hastily. Riall and his headquarters staff moved too slow, and the Americans captured the general.

Brown now arrived with Ripley's brigade. These men had marched at double time for nearly an hour, yet they went into line and relieved Scott's brigade of the attack without rest. The British had concluded they would have a rest when Ripley charged. As his line was re-joined, Porter's brigade arrived. Brown now decided to charge the British batteries. He called Colonel Miller of the Twenty-first Infantry to him. He pointed to the battery and asked the Colonel if he could take it. "I will try, sir," the Colonel replied. The First Regiment, under Colonel Nicholas, was ordered to support him.

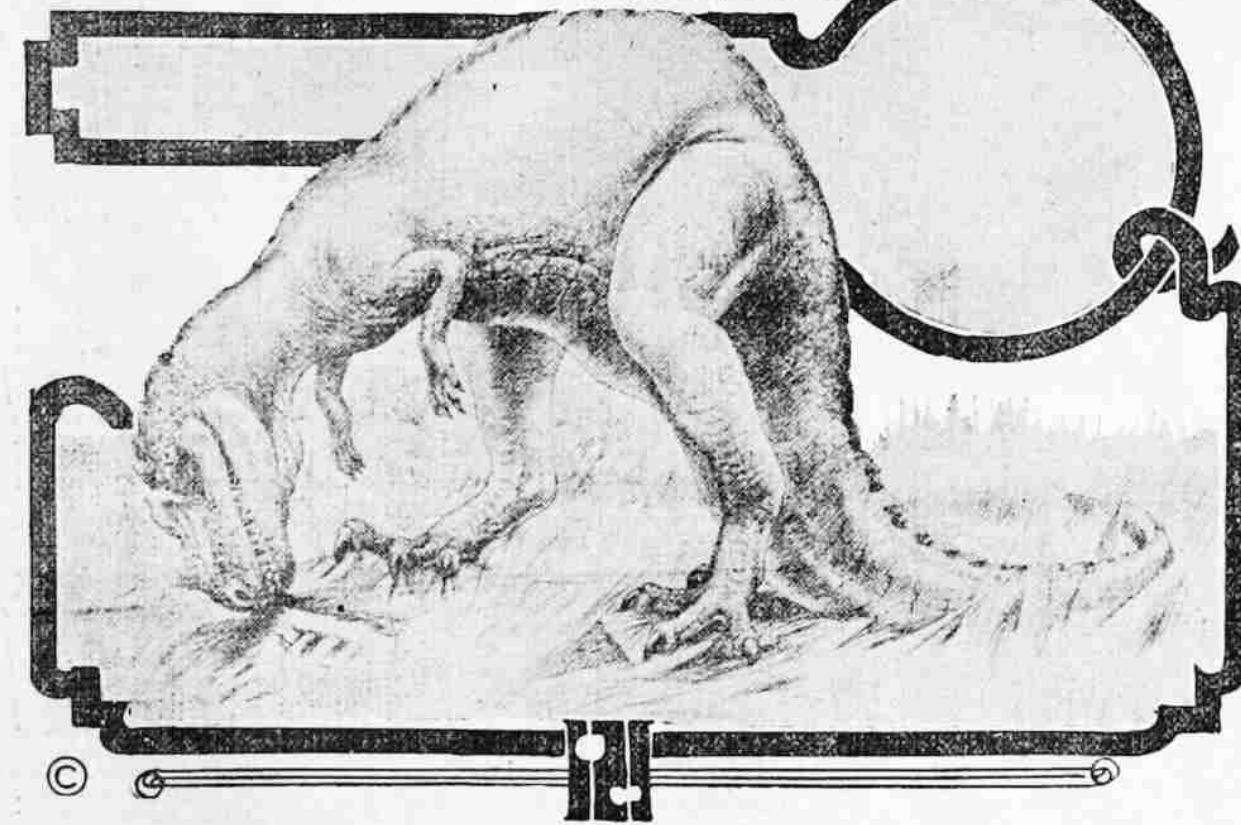
It was now dark. Only a waning moon shed a dim light over the battle field. The sound of conflict had ebbed away until in the ever increasing intervals of artillery fire the rattle of musketry was hardly heard. Miller's men crawled forward. They reached a low fence within twenty yards of the batteries undiscovered. Poking their long rifles over the lower rail, they took careful aim at the gunners, outlined against the evening sky, and fired. A bayonet charge followed. In less than ten minutes the British were in full flight and American supports were taking possession of the deserted works. For many years after this the Twenty-first Infantry wore the words, "I will try, sir," on the buttons of their coats.

Drummond now moved his reserves into action and took charge of the British force. He formed his fresh men at the foot of the hill and attempted to retake the position. Five separate assaults were made that night. The American troops would fire one volley at the red flashes of the British guns and then rush out to end the tussle hand to hand. Fully half the dead, after the five British charges had failed, had fallen from bayonet and sword wounds. Scott's brigade, now rested, made a counter charge after the fifth British assault. It was nearly midnight. They drove the British, better-skilled, down Lundy's Lane. Unfortunately, the commander was wounded severely and forced to go to the rear. Brown was also struck and the command devolved upon Ripley.

For some reason, early in the morning of July 26 Ripley withdrew the army after spiking the British guns, which could not be moved for lack of horses. Brown did not learn of the retreat until sunrise. Even then, weak from loss of blood and sleep, he ordered that the hill be recaptured. But Drummond had taken advantage of Ripley's error and Brown soon realized that it would be suicidal to attack again. The army went back to Fort Erie, where, under General Gaines, it soon withstood a siege.

Poor Little Boy, at picnic, suffering from reptile—Oh, please, Miss, don't ask me to have any more; I can't say no."

"Bobby, I suppose you say your prayers every night." "Yes'm." "And what are the things you pray for?" "Mostly that pop won't find out what I've been doing through the day."



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sea serpent is no more. No more tales of his prowess have been circulated for some years and stone-hearted telegraph editors of the metropolitan dailies refuse to buy stories from coast town correspondents who send in news of the sea serpents.

In the earlier days of American scare head journalism the summer resort correspondents used to make considerable money seeing sea serpents. The demand for them was good. The last great sea serpent discoverer of note faded from fame a score of years ago. At that time he was on the coast of New Jersey and the summer season was opening all along the Atlantic seaboard. The correspondent wired to his editor in New York a query something like the following:

"Great sea monster seen off the coast. Breathes fire and smoke from his nostrils and is trying to reach lighthouse keeper. Worth 10,000 words."

The telegraph editor looked the message over and wired back: "Change your brand of whisky." The first sea serpent of history was seen during the reign of Ptolemy II, who ruled at Alexandria, Egypt, when it was one of the centers of art and learning. This serpent was a pony compared with

covered with scales, and the skin was uneven and wrinkled. The lower part was formed like a snake. After some time the creature plunged backward into the water, and then turned its tail up above the surface, a whole ship-length from the head. The following evening we had very bad weather."

## CAPTAIN MAKES OATH TO SEEING SERPENT.

Capt. Lawrence de Ferry, commander of Bergen, Norway, was another man who saw sea serpents at that period. Captain de Ferry had made statements about the serpent and Bishop Pontoppidan called on him to prove what he had seen. The captain and two of his seamen made oath to the following statement:

"The latter end of August of the year 1746, I was on a voyage, in my return from Trondheim, in a very calm and hot day, having a mind to put in at Holde. It happened that when we were arrived with my vessel within six miles of the aforesaid Molde, being a place called Jule-Næss, as I was reading in a book, I heard a kind of murmuring voice from among the men at the oars, who were eight in number, and observed that the man at the helm kept off from the land.

"Upon this I inquired what was the matter, and was informed there was a sea snake upon us. I then ordered the man at the helm to keep up with the land and come near this animal of which I had heard so many stories, which I did not believe. Though the fellows were under some apprehension they were obliged to obey my orders or be hung at the yard arm. In the meantime the sea snake came near us and we were compelled to tack the vessel in order to get a near view. As the snake swam faster than we could possibly row and as the wind was too light for sailing, I fired at the snake, whereupon it dived beneath the waves.

"We rowed to the place where it went down, which in the calm could easily be observed, thinking it might return, but it did not. The head of the sea serpent was like that of a horse, with long black, white and deep black eyes. We saw seven or eight coils of the snake."

Captain Little of the United States Navy saw a sea serpent near Boston in 1780. He was there waiting for a fight with a British ship when the serpent suddenly appeared. They were making ready to fire upon it when it plunged beneath the waves, never to appear